

The Smart Beans Project

Our group of volunteers pick up coffee from coffee shops twice a week. We need help.

Why?

It's important to keep this valuable waste out of landfill. Why valuable? Coffee contains lots of nitrogen, very good for plant growth. Lots of people know about using the grounds in compost or mulch. However, if not done correctly, the decomposing coffee grounds give off methane, which is 25-35 times more potent than CO₂. Worse still, the methane decomposes in the atmosphere over 10-12 years, turning into CO₂.

So, what's involved?

We use a small tipper truck to collect the grounds, every Tuesday and Friday mornings. We meet at the first coffee shop around 9:30. Volunteers collect the buckets from the shop and empty them into the back of the tipper.

We take the coffee (usually 200-350 kg at a time) out to a company at Mt Low where it is added to other green waste (garden waste, waste organic textiles, etc). Utilising a special organic process, the waste is turned in hummus, a rich, soil-like product, 1000 tons at a time. This is used as a top dressing but a variety of organisations including the Townsville City Council. The hummus is a great soil improver that reduces the need for fertilizer and return carbon to the soil. (We like to say we're making coal! And we're only half-joking!)

In our first month we have collected about **two tonnes** of coffee grounds. We're hoping to increase this to a tonne a week. To put this in context, Terracycle, who collect and process coffee pods/capsules for almost all brands besides Nespresso, collect about 26 tonnes of coffee grounds a year, for the whole of Australia... a tiny fraction. They're doing a great job – but people generally just toss their capsules in the bin, which then goes into landfill.

Townsville! This is a great opportunity to show the way.

To get involved, call David on 041 666 2410 or Katharina on 049 104 2487

